



MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

www.midjerseypeds.com

**33 Brunswick Woods Drive
East Brunswick, NJ 08816
(732) 257-4330**

**25 Kilmer Drive
Building #3, Suite 107
Morganville, NJ 07751
(732) 972-6888**

FEBRILE SEIZURES

Definition

Febrile seizures are seizures triggered by fever. They are the most common type of convulsion, occurring in ~4% of children. While they may be frightening to witness, they are, in general, harmless. The children are usually between 6 months and 5 years of age. The most common age of onset is during the second year of life. The average fever at which they occur is 104⁰F (40⁰C), but they can occur at any temperature. The fever itself can be caused by an infection in any part of the body. Each febrile seizure usually lasts 1 to 10 minutes without any treatment. Two-thirds of these children have just 1 febrile seizure in a lifetime. The other one-third have 2 or 3 recurrences over the years. Febrile seizures usually stop occurring by 5 or 6 years of age. Although a febrile seizure is frightening to witness, it will not cause any brain damage. The likelihood of developing epilepsy after a simple febrile seizure is very small.

First Aid

Protect your child's airway. If your child has anything in the mouth, clear it with a finger to prevent choking. Place your child on the side or abdomen (face down) to help drain secretions. If the child vomits, help clear the mouth. Use a suction bulb if available. If your child's breathing becomes noisy, pull the jaw and chin forward.

Common Mistakes in the First Aid of Convulsions. During the seizure, don't try to restrain your child or stop the seizure movements. Once started, the seizure will run its course no matter what you do. Don't try to force anything into your child's mouth. This is unnecessary and can cut the mouth, injure a tooth, cause vomiting, or result in a serious bite of your finger. Don't try to hold the tongue. While children may rarely bite the tongue during a convulsion, they can't "swallow the tongue".

When the seizure is over and your child is awake, give the usual dose of acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4 hours or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) every 6 hours for at least the next 48 hours, or longer if the fever persists. Awaken him or her once during the night for the medicine. A lukewarm bath may also help control the fever. (Never give alcohol baths.) It is normal for your child to be sleepy for 1-2 hours following a febrile seizure.

Prevention

Try to control fever more closely than is necessary for children without febrile seizures. Begin acetaminophen at the first sign of any fever (temperature over 100⁰F [37.8⁰C]). Febrile convulsions usually occur during the first day of an illness. If your child has a fever at bedtime, awaken him or her once during the night to give acetaminophen. Avoid covering your child with more than one blanket because bundling during sleep can push the temperature up 1 or 2 extra degrees.

Since anticonvulsants have side effects and febrile seizures are generally harmless, anticonvulsants are rarely prescribed anymore unless your child has other neurological problems. Your physician will discuss this decision with you.

CALL OUR OFFICES IMMEDIATELY:

- If another seizure occurs
- If your child becomes confused or delirious
- If the febrile convulsion continues for more than 5 minutes
- If your child becomes difficult to awaken
- If you feel your child is getting worse
- If the neck becomes stiff